REMARKS

As an initial remark, the applicant notes that the application as originally filed included claims 1-16 and 18-19. Through a typographical error, no claim 17 was provided. In a February 2005 phone call, the examiner confirmed that for purposes of examination he had renumbered claims 18-19 as claims 17-18, respectively, although this was not noted in the December 13 Office Action. For clarity, the claims have been left as originally numbered with the "blank" claim 17 cancelled herein. The examiner's rejections of claims 17-18 have been substantively treated as rejections of original claims 18-19.

In the December 13, 2004 Office Action, claims 1-3, 7-10 and 12-17 have been rejected as obvious over the combination of U.S. Patent No. 6,266,683 to Yehuda ("the '683 patent"), U.S. Patent No. 6,714,313 to Sugaya ("the 313 patent"). Claims 4-6 stand rejected as obvious over the '683 patent, the '313 patent and U.S. Patent No. 5,768,483 to Maniwa ("the '483 patent"). Claims 11 and 18 stand rejected as obvious over the '683 patent, the '313 patent and U.S. Patent No. 5,510,623 to Tomita ("the 623 patent"). The claims have been amended herein to more clearly reflect particular embodiments of the present invention. It is submitted that in their present form the claims recite elements not disclosed or suggested by any of the cited references either alone or in combination and are therefore allowable.

Independent claim 1 recites an output distribution module for selectively creating a plurality of print job output subsets from execution of a single document print job and for selectively directing one of the plurality of output subsets to one of the plurality of output receptacles, wherein at least two of the plurality of job output subsets contain different numbers of output subsets. It is submitted that none of the cited references disclose these recited elements. The Examiner has cited the '683 patent as teaching an output distribution module that can create a plurality of job output subsets from a single document production job where at least two of the output subsets contain different numbers of output documents. The Examiner cites col. 7, lines 28-38 of the

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'683 patent for disclosing this. It is respectfully submitted, however, that the cited portion of the '683 patent fails to disclose this (as does any other portion).

Instead, the cited portion of the '683 patent only teaches that a document may be parsed into individual segments: "Parsing procedure 82 parses the divisible documents 74 and creates individual data structures called 'segments'". Id. The documents parsed are limited to those that are divisible according to sections: "Parsing and segmenting a divisible document 74 requires that...(it) is written to follow certain structural rules for headings and/or breaks." The '683 patent, col. 8, lines 38-41. "(T)he parsing procedure 82 may create segments corresponding to a group of sub-parts or a divisible document..." The '683 patent, col. 9, lines 50-51. Accordingly, the '683 patent fails to disclose executing a single document print job and directing output sets of different numbers of printed documents to different output receptacles as is claimed, but instead only discloses parsing a document into segments and distributing the segments.

Further, it is submitted that the teachings of the '683 patent are different from the invention claimed by claim 1 since it discloses use of a virtual document as it exists on a computer network. See '683 patent, Abstract; Summary of the Invention; col. 18, lines 4-34. The segments of the '683 patent are not individually printed. Id. The invention embodiment claimed by amended claim 1, on the other hand, is directed to creation of subsets of output printed documents having different numbers of documents. It is submitted that claim 1 as amended is allowable. Claims 2-10 have been amended to more clearly reflect embodiments of the invention, and are allowable over the cited references for the same reasons as are that claim (in addition to other reasons).

Independent claim 11 stands rejected as obvious over the '683 patent, the '313 patent and the '623 patent. The Examiner cites the '683 patent for disclosing creating a plurality of subsets of output documents from a single job when at least two of the output sets have different numbers of documents. As discussed above, however, it is submitted that the '683 patent fails to disclose this but instead only discloses parsing a single document into segments. It is further submitted that the '683 patent is directed only to virtual documents. Claim 11, on the other hand, has been amended to recite that

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the output documents comprise a medium selected from a group of mediums including papers, polyethylene, polycarbonate, polystyrene, synthetic sheets and metal sheets. Support for this is found on page 13, lines 21-27 of the specification. Claim 11 is therefore allowable.

Independent claim 12 stands rejected as obvious over the '683 patent in combination with the '313 patent. Independent claim 12 is directed to a printer comprising a driver that selectively causes the printer to create a plurality of subsets of output printed documents from a single print job with at least two of the plurality of output sets having different numbers of printed documents. The '683 patent fails to disclose this. Claim 13 depends from claim 12 and is allowable over the cited references for the same reasons as are that claim (in addition to other reasons).

Independent claim 14 stands rejected as obvious over the '683 patent in combination with the '313 patent. Claim 14 has been amended to recite a computer program product that when executed causes an apparatus to accept a plurality of input subset quantity selections, each comprising a number of printed documents to be placed in one each of a plurality of output subsets, at least two of the subsets having different numbers. The printed documents comprise a medium selected from the group of mediums including papers, polyethylene, polycarbonate, polystyrene, synthetic sheets and metal sheets. As discussed herein, the '683 patent fails to disclose or suggest this. For this and other reasons, independent claim 14 and claim 15 that depends therefrom are allowable over the cited references.

Independent claim 16 stands rejected as obvious over the '683 patent in combination with the '313 patent. As amended, claim 16 is directed to a computer program product that causes a printer to selectively create a plurality of job output subsets from the output of a single print job, each of the output subsets containing a number of printed documents, at least two of the subsets containing different numbers of printed documents from one another. As discussed herein, none of the cited references, including the '683 patent, disclose or suggest this claimed element. For this and other reasons,

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claim 16 is allowable. Claim 18 depends from claim 16 and is allowable for the same reasons as are that claim (in addition to other reasons).
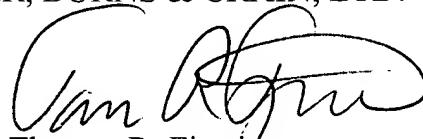
Independent claim 19 stands rejected as obvious over the '683 patent in combination with the '313 patent and the '623 patent. As amended, independent claim 19 recites a computer program product that causes a copier to create a plurality of job output subsets from the execution of a single copy job. Each of the output subsets contain a number of documents to be printed specified by a user input subset quality selection, with at least two of the subsets containing different numbers of documents to be printed. The output documents comprise a medium selected from the group of mediums including papers, polyethylene, polycarbonate, polystyrene, synthetic sheets and metal sheets. As discussed above, none of the references either alone or in combination disclose or suggest this step. The '683 patent, for example, fails to disclose output documents comprised of a medium as claimed, and further fails to disclose the execution of a copy job. Independent claim 19 is therefore allowable.

In conclusion, it is believed that the claims in their amended form are allowable over the cited references. Timely allowance is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner determine that issues remain requiring attention before the claims can be allowed, the favor of a phone conference with the undersigned Attorney to discuss the same is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

GREER, BURNS & CRAIN, LTD.

By   Thomas R. Fitzsimons
Registration No. 40,607

March 9, 2005

Suite 2500
300 South Wacker Drive
Chicago, Illinois 60606
(312) 360-0080
Customer No. 24978